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164 because they are constantly exposed to smoke from the hut fire. Mental disorders occur very rarely, but "idiocy is unknown" /translated from French/, as Hyades (y):339 asserts. Many an aged person suffers from impaired hearing, ufkir-tuwa. Infectious general diseases, actual epidemics, lēshāja, lēmāja, did not occur before there was contact with Europeans.

• 759 Thus our Yamana suffered very little from disease. This was especially advantageous because effective remedies are totally lacking in their country (362). They try to alleviate the

362. This has been confirmed a number of times. Fitz-Roy (a):186 writes: "When ill, however seriously, they know of no remedies but rubbing the body with oil, drinking cold water, and causing perspiration by lying near the fire, wrapped up in skins" /cited in English/. Despard (b):698 asserts: "Remedies are simple indeed; they burn the part where pain is felt, or produce counter-irritation by whipping with stinging nettles" /cited in English/. According to Hyades (f):585, "the Fuegians do not know any medicines" /translated from French/. Finally, Aspinall:270 says briefly: "The art of medicine is limited to rubbing and the infusion of a few roots."

pain or ailment with procedures recommended by general health care. For some reason they expect great results when they are unwell by totally abstaining from food for a whole day. As Bridges (i):19 also declares, everyone expects that this will even bring "good health and efficiency in hunting" /cited in English/. For this reason a hunter considers it beneath his dignity to take refreshment with him when he goes hunting. A sick person sits huddled up in his hut, remains motionless, and lets the warmth of the hut fire have its effect on him. When he requests something, a member of the family hands him what he wants. The Yamana often recommend perspiring: the sick person is placed beside the fire and covered with many skins. Rubber is often used: for rheumatism, the affected part of the body is rubbed with it; for

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757 an ear ailment the blubber is warmed in a mussel shell and drops are put into the ear canal. As an alternative, especially to clean the ears of small children, a bit of milk is squeezed from a woman's breast, warmed in a mussel shell, and trickled into the ear passage. The same remedy is used to cleanse the eyes of newborn babies and generally for eye diseases in small children. If a person has a cramp, kelécki, in some limb, it is rubbed with fresh leaves of Drimys. In case of lumbago, a man is treated in the following manner. He lies down on his belly. His wife warms her right foot at the fire and places /1458/ it gently on his back. Then she lifts her left foot so that the entire weight of her body rests on her right foot. After some time, when the warmth has gone out of her right foot, she climbs down and again warms it. She treats the entire back, section by section, in this way, beginning at the buttocks and proceeding up to the neck.

278 As a laxative the Yamana recommend chewing the leaves, liuť, of ukútta (Drimys winteri); this is also effective for heart and stomach ailments. Still more effective are large quantities of blubber which must be drunk at brief intervals. Finally, the sap of young beech trees is used in the following manner. The small trunk is broken off or chopped off, the end held over a fire, and the dripping sap caught in a mussel shell. They swallow the sap, as is, and await its laxative effect. This remedy also heals inflamed eyes. In the case of inflamed eyes, téila sex, an actual eye bath is recommended; that is, dipping the face in salt water and opening and closing the eyelids several times while doing so. For cases of violent vomiting, amťja, one drinks a great deal of

278 salt water. The large beard moss, tuxalapaťla (Usnea barbata), is effective against the type of diarrhea, ulpalaxna or yikena, that is common there. One chews small amounts of it, swallows the juice, and spits out the wood fibers. Nowadays an extract is prepared in a suitable pot. Celery, huťun,

278 is recommended for diseases of the respiratory organs; stalks of this plant are chewed and the juice swallowed. For coughs the Yamana rub the outside of the throat with spittle, perform a brief, actually magical massage, and finally blow away the coughs, háťa, with lively motions of the hands. A person who coughs up blood drinks salt water; better still, he stands in the water, ducks under a few times, swallows

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•751 the water a number of times, and then dries himself and lies down beside the hut fire. For strong palpitations and shooting pains in the heart the patient must remain motionless on his bed. A person who feels feverish, a rare phenomenon, lies down on the beach in such a way that the waves cover him; sometimes he stays under water for 20 minutes or longer. He does not eat blubber, fat, or the meat of whales, seals, or birds.

As a remedy for the very common headache, fresh nettles are put around the forehead and secured with leather bands. The entire head is also gently whipped with a bunch of Pernettya mucronata (Fig. 12, p. 121 /in untranslated portion/), whose small leaves, as is known, end in sharp, hard points. The yékamus also helps in his way by grasping a bunch of the sufferer's hair and suddenly pulling upward, which causes a faint crackling sound. As an alternative, according to Despard (b):698, "they roast their heads, and take repeated draughts of stagnant sea-water to produce nausea" /cited in English/. Bridges (i):19 maintains, as I, too, observed: "Headache was relieved by making the nose to bleed by cutting it within the nostrils" /cited in English/. Painful areas are relieved by short superficial cuts, causing a slight flow of blood. For sharp pains in the chest and labored breathing, flat /1459/ stones the size of a hand are placed on the chest after being heated in the fire; when they cool off, they are reheated. A magical effect is obtained if someone hits the painful part with a piece of skin and with each blow loudly and with great exertion exhales a stream of air.

751 278 The Yamana heal suppurating wounds and abcesses, alax, in various ways. The bark of young branches or long twigs from any kind of tree are held with one end over the fire. The sap dripping off the other end is allowed to fall on the affected part. In the winter finger-thick stalks of Macrocystis are used. Certain growths on beech trunks, about the size of a cherry, contain a sticky substance that is dripped into the wound after crushing the growth. Then down feathers are spread over the wound, which stick to it and dry it up. For skin eruptions, eczema, and similar conditions, chalk powder is rubbed over the entire body or the resinous, gum-like discharge of the cushion plant (Azorella) is

/1459 cont./

spread over it; the latter is a reliable remedy for growths resembling carbuncles. Pustules are daubed and rubbed gently with saliva. Fresh small twigs and leaves of Macrocystis are put on swellings; they develop a slimy substance which is allowed to take effect. Fresh barberry shavings are put on an aching tooth. Loose teeth are broken and pulled out with the fingers. Hyades (p):339 says something that I cannot confirm from my own observations: "Insanity, if it exists, is very rare. The mad are treated with cold baths" /translated from French/. A broken arm is treated by first placing thin sticks and a few pieces of leather around it; then this is bound with stout strips of leather. The bandage is kept in place until the pain and swelling have subsided. These are the procedures that the Fuegians know for helping themselves in case of accidents and physical ailments.

7. The Language

It is well known that the language of the Yamana has often been described in general accounts and there is an astonishing amount of material. Many a writer has let himself be carried away in repeated references to an unusually rich vocabulary. Bridges himself started this trend. I tried to explain in (gg):162 why he said that his dictionary contained 32,430 words. I have also emphatically pointed out that the Yamana language does not have that number of words and that a rich vocabulary by no means indicates a high level of development for this language. "Quite the contrary," I (hh):183 said earlier, "one will recognize the considerable poverty of a language from the fact that it requires many words." Long before, Garbe:336 pointed to this decisive condition. No one is to be blamed for the fact that a critical study of Yamana grammar as a whole has not yet been carried out -- F. Hestermann worked on a number of parts -- /1460/ for texts are lacking. The comprehensive dictionary of the Reverend T. Bridges was only published in 1933 by Hestermann and Gusinde, and the well-known translations of the New Testament that Bridges made six decades ago are not suitable for this purpose. I, too, should not be reproached and told that I failed to collect original texts. To exonerate myself, I may point out that on my journeys I was

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278
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There was almost nothing in the way of herbal curatives, unless the chewing of the leaves of *Drimys winteri* as a purgative and for cardiac and stomach pains could be considered such. Sap from the broken end of a beech branch was swallowed for certain ailments. Other simple remedial measures employed were drinking oil, rubbing the body with it, massaging with *Drimys winteri* leaves, drinking sea water, covering with robes and sweating near the fire. Chalk dust was smeared on for skin eruptions. To cure headache, the nasal passages were scratched to bring about nosebleed.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

113

For bibliographic references, see pages 59-65.